

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00
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R 100521Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4385
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY SANA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USLO PEKING
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY
AMCONSUL DJIBOUTI

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 3620

FROM DJIBOUTI CONSUL GENERAL CLARKE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, PINT, FT
SUBJ: REFLECTIONS ON DJIBOUTI INDEPENDENCE

1. ECONOMIC SITUATION. BY ANY STANDARDS, THE INDEPENDENT
REPUBLIC OF DJIBOUTI TO BE PROCLAIMED ON JUNE 27 WILL BE ONE
OF THE WORLD'S POOREST AND MOST FRAGILE SOVERIGN STATES.
WITH THREE UNIVERSITY GRADUATES AND AN INDIGENOUS ECONOMY
WHICH EXISTS ONLY AS A SIDE EFFECT OF THE MAINTENANCE OF
COLONIAL CIVILIAN ADMINISTRATORS AND MILITARY IN DJIBOUTI,
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IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE A COUNTRY WITH A MORE NARROW INFRA-
STRUCTURE TO SUPPORT ITS INDEPENDENT STATUS. EVEN ITS
FIXED RESOURCES, WHICH CONSIST OF A GOOD PORT AND AN
ANCIENT RAILWAY WHICH TIES THE COAST TO ETHIOPIA'S
SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS, ARE SUBJECT TO EXTERNAL PRESSURES
QUITE BEYOND THE ABILITY OF THE FUTURE LEADERSHIP OF
DJIBOUTI TO EXERCISE ANY PARTICULAR INFLUENCE. THE FIRST

PRIORITY OF THE GOVERNMENT IS TO DEVISE SOME MEASURES TO RELIEVE THE CRITICAL UNEMPLOYMENT SITUATION IN DJIBOUTI TOWN WHICH PROVIDES WORK FOR ONLY ONE POTENTIAL WORKER IN FIVE.

2. RELATIONS WITH U.S. AND FRANCE. SINCE THE INSTALLATION OF THE PRESENT AUTONOMOUS GOVERNMENT IN POWER IN MID-MAY, THE CONSUL GENERAL HAS DISCUSSED THE FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC SITUATION OF DJIBOUTI WITH PRESIDENT HASSAN GOULED APTIDON, MOST OF HIS MINISTERS AND OTHER HIGH-RANKING OFFICIALS TO SOON-TO-BE INDEPENDENT DJIBOUTI. WITHOUT EXCEPTION, ALL OF THESE LEADERS EXPRESS A DESIRE FOR CLOSE FRIENDSHIP WITH THE U.S. GOVERNMENT. ALTHOUGH MOST OF THESE PEOPLE MADE THEIR POLITICAL CAREERS IN OPPOSITION TO THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT'S LOCAL POLITICAL CLIENTS, THEY INDICATE THEIR DESIRE TO CONTINUE TO WORK WITH FRENCH TECHNICIANS AND FRENCH BUSINESS AFTER INDEPENDENCE. THERE IS A UNIVERSAL BITTERNESS AGAINST THE FRENCH AT THE LACK OF PREPARATION OF THEIR COUNTRY FOR INDEPENDENCE.

3. PRAGMATIC LEADERSHIP. THERE ARE NOT FIXED IDEOLOGICAL LABELS WHICH CAN BE ATTACHED TO THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT. THE TOP LEADERSHIP IS CURRENTLY DEVOTED TO ADOPTING THE MOST PRAGMATIC MEASURES NECESSARY TO BEGIN TO DEVELOP THEIR COUNTRY. AT THE SAME TIME, THERE APPEARS TO BE A SINCERE DESIRE TO DEVELOP A SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT STRESSING LIBERAL HUMAN AND ECONOMIC VALUES IN WHICH THE PITFALLS EXPERIENCED BY NEIGHBORING

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COUNTRIES AND OTHERS CAN BE AVOIDED.

4. RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBORS. EVERY LEADER IN DJIBOUTI'S GOVERNMENT IS A GEOPOLITICIAN BY DESIRE OR NECESSITY, REALIZING THAT DJIBOUTI'S SOVERIGNTY RESIDES ON THEIR ABILITY TO BALANCE ETHIOPIA'S ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL DEPENDENCE WITH SOMALIA'S SENTIMENTAL (AND NO DOUBT MILITARY) INTERESTS IN THE COUNTRY. MORE THAN ONE MINISTER COMMENTED THAT ONCE THEIR PARTY, THE L.P.A. I. WAS IN POWER THEY COULD NO LONGER FAVOR ONE NEIGHBOR OVER ANOTHER.

5. ASPIRATIONS OF THE LEADERSHIP. THE NEW GOVERNMENT OF DJIBOUTI HARBORS THE DREAM OF BECOMING A HAVEN FOR BUSINESS, SHIPPING AND BANKING INTERESTS IN AN AREA DOMINATED BY UNSUCCESSFUL STATE SOCIALIST EXPERIMENTS. THE FAVORITE COMPANION IS WITH HONG KONG. GIVEN THE FACT THAT VIRTUALLY ALL OF DJIBOUTI'S FOOD IS IMPORTED, THERE IS A LOGICAL DESIRE TO MAKE INTENSIVE EFFORTS

TO DEVELOP DOMESTIC AGRICULTURE WHICH WOULD ALSO RELIEVE
UNEMPLOYMENT. EXPLAINING THEIR DESIRE TO PROTECT THE
FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND TO PROMOTE A RESPECT FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS, GOVERNMENT LEADERS WITNESS THAT NEARLY
EVERY CITIZEN OF AN INDEPENDENT DJIBOUTI IS EITHER THE
CHILD OR THE GRANDCHILD OF DEEPLY RELIGIOUS AND FIERCELY
INDEPENDENT NOMADS.

6. THE U.S. ROLE. AT THE PRESENT TIME, THE LEADERSHIP
OF DJIBOUTI IS OPEN AND READY TO TAKE OPTIONS WHICH WILL
NOT NECESSARILY BE OPEN TO THEM A YEAR FROM NOW IF THEY
ARE NOT ABLE IN THE MEANTIME TO SHOW SOME RESULTS. IT
IS MY HOPE THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT AND OTHER SIMILARLY
MOTIVATED COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS WILL MOVE QUICKLY
TO PROVIDE SOME OF THE TOOLS NEEDED BY THE NEW GOVERNMENT
OF DJIBOUTI TO DEMONSTRATE TO ITS CONSTITUENTS THE
VALUES OF NATIONAL UNITY AND THE BENEFITS OF LIBERAL
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GOVERNMENT. THE GOVERNMENT OF DJIBOUTI HAS APPROACHED
THE CONGEN WITH A PROJECT TO FOSTER AGRICULTURAL
DEVELOPMENT WHICH WILL BE REPORTED SEPARATELY. I CAN
THINK OF FEW MATTERS OF HIGHER PRIORITY IN DESERTIC
DJIBOUTI. IT IS A CHALLENGE AND WE SHOULD ACCEPT.
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